

Application No. 10/643,952
Amendment dated January 14, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed October 28, 2004

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application in light of the present amendment and remarks is respectfully requested. In the present response, claims 11, 18, and 19 have been canceled, and claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-19 have been amended. Claims 1-10 and 12-17 remain pending in this application.

Formal matters

The Abstract of the Disclosure has been objected to because of the presence of the word "means" at line 8. In response, Applicant has submitted an appropriate replacement paragraph that cures this objection by replacing the word "means" with the word --way--. Accordingly, the Abstract of the Disclosure is now believed to be in compliance with all formal requirements.

Claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-19 have been objected to on various grounds. In response, Applicant has amended claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-17 substantially in accordance with Examiner's suggestions.

Claims 18 and 19 have been canceled, as those claims appear to be merely duplicative of claims 15 and 16.

Accordingly, claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-17 are now believed to be in compliance with all formal requirements.

Substantive matters

Claim 11 has been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Kominami (U.S. Patent 6,424,100). This rejection is moot in view of Applicant's cancellation of claim 11.

Claims 1-10 and 12-19 have been indicated as allowable, subject to curing of the formal objections to claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-19. The present amendments to claims 1-3, 6-12, and 15-

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17 cure all formal objections. As previously noted, claims 18 and 19 have been voluntarily
canceled, because those claims appear to be merely duplicative of claims 15 and 16.

Accordingly, claims 1-10 and 12-17 are now in a condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, passing of this case is now in order. Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's agent by telephone if such communication may be helpful in the further examination of this case. A Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to:

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On _____
(Date of Deposit)

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Respectfully submitted,

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